UNITED
NATIONS

A

General Assembly

Distr.
GENERAL

A/50/511
5 October 1995

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

Fiftieth session
Agenda item 111

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES OF THE INTERNATIONAL DECADE OF THE WORLD'S INDIGENOUS PEOPLE

Final report on a comprehensive programme of action for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The General Assembly, in its resolution 48/163 of 21 December 1993, requested the Secretary-General to submit a final report on a comprehensive programme of action for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. In its resolution 49/214 of 23 December 1994, the Assembly invited Governments to submit written comments to the Secretary-General, by the end of August 1995, on the preliminary report and its annexes (A/49/444), with a view to the preparation of a final comprehensive programme of action for the Decade. In the same resolution, the General Assembly recommended that a second technical meeting on the planning of the Decade be held prior to the thirteenth session of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations.

2. The present document contains a summary of the comments on the Secretary-General's preliminary report received from Governments as at 15 September 1995, the proposed programme of action of the technical meeting held in accordance with General Assembly resolution 49/214 (annex I) and the recommendations of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations at its thirteenth session (annex II). The Secretary-General also submits a proposed calendar of activities for consideration by the General Assembly (annex III). The Secretary-General further wishes to draw the attention of the Assembly to the report to be submitted at the current session, in accordance with paragraph 13 (e) of resolution 49/214, on progress made at the national, regional and international levels in accomplishing the objectives of the Decade.

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COMMENTS RECEIVED FROM GOVERNMENTS

3. The following Governments provided information in response to General Assembly resolution 49/214: Brazil, New Zealand. The information provided is summarized below.

Brazil

4. In a communication dated 21 February 1995, the Permanent Mission of Brazil to the United Nations stated that, having participated in activities pertaining to the International Year for the World's Indigenous People - 1993, the Government considered that the Year had not met the expectations raised among indigenous people and developing countries in general owing to the lack of time for preparation and implementation. The International Decade seemed an opportunity to follow up on the International Year. Brazil also stated that the results of the technical meeting to evaluate the Year and plan the Decade had not been satisfactory. In particular, the main purposes of the Decade were lost among initiatives of limited scope or proposals to establish direct communication links between the United Nations system and indigenous communities, without due regard to the legitimate role of national Governments as the appropriate channel for international cooperation.

5. Brazil further stated that one of the lessons of the three technical meetings was that the format of the meeting itself had been exhausted. The increasing number of indigenous participants showed an eagerness to be heard at the United Nations. However, the United Nations system lacked preparation to cope with this new form of participation. Brazil therefore welcomed the decision to request the Secretary-General to request written comments on the preliminary programme of activities. The Government also believed that the Working Group on Indigenous Populations could fulfil a useful role in reviewing international activities undertaken during the Decade and receiving voluntary information from Governments on the implementation of the goals of the Decade in their respective countries. The overall evaluation should be carried out by the Economic and Social Council at mid-term and end-term reviews in accordance with its resolution 1988/63 of 27 July 1988.

6. A concern for Brazil was the emphasis placed on the establishment of direct contacts between indigenous people and United Nations organizations. In the view of the Government, such an approach might jeopardize the coordinating role of Governments in national development and distort international cooperation for development. The main role of the Coordinator should be to coordinate with other United Nations bodies. He should not bypass the normal channels of communication with States Members of the United Nations. Governments will establish national committees for the Decade involving indigenous people and the Coordinator for the Decade should use diplomatic channels to be informed of activities planned. The theme of the Decade, "Partnership in Action", should be construed as fostering the common understanding between indigenous people and the national societies of which they are a part. The United Nations should be asked to mobilize its resources to provide assistance to countries through appropriate channels for implementing activities planned by the national committees. The Government stated that the specialized agencies of the United Nations are expected to plan for the Decade and make their expertise available

to help achieve the goals set out. It was encouraged by the relevant resolution of the forty-seventh session of the World Health Assembly and hoped that other agencies would follow this example and elaborate plans of action to guide their activities for the Decade.

7. Brazil maintains that the success of the Decade will depend on the means available for the implementation of national development programmes directed at the improvement of living conditions of indigenous people. Mobilization of financial resources cannot be restricted to assist small-scale projects. The Government made reference to chapters 26 and 33 of Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and stated that international financial cooperation should be used to implement national programmes. Brazil had doubts about the attribution of annual themes for the Decade as they could hamper the development of long-term programmes.

New Zealand

8. The Permanent Mission of New Zealand to the United Nations, in a communication dated 14 September 1995, stated that it was pleased with the progress and range of proposals made towards the final plan of action in strengthening international cooperation. The engagement of indigenous peoples themselves in the planning was key. New Zealand emphasized the importance of action by United Nations agencies and believed that they should devote greater commitment and resources to the issues and problems faced by indigenous people. The Decade, the Government stated, is a time for concretely reinforcing and strengthening programmes agencies may already be running for indigenous people, as well as taking a fresh look at how indigenous people's interests can be better reflected in programming and budgeting. New Zealand supports proposals that agencies report on progress, develop research and data about indigenous people's living conditions and establish focal points. It also supports the publication of a suitably designed manual on their operations and procedures to facilitate activities in this area.

9. New Zealand looks forward to working regionally with the Western Pacific Regional Committee of the World Health Organization (WHO). Referring to a suggestion that regional instruments to protect indigenous people might be developed, the Government observed that the primary focus at the current stage must be the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. New Zealand attaches particular importance to the establishment of an indigenous people's unit within the Centre for Human Rights, so as to ensure that an appropriately permanent structure and adequate resources are devoted to these issues. It also supports human rights training for indigenous people and the establishment of fellowship programmes to enhance familiarity with the United Nations system.

10. New Zealand notes that careful thought is being given to the most effective and accountable way to administer the Decade Trust Fund to encourage contributions from Governments and others. So far, it has donated a seed contribution of $25,000. New Zealand would welcome periodic information reports on disbursements from the Fund. Under the Principles Guiding New Zealand's Official Development Assistance Programme, attention is given to the way the use of funds will safeguard the interests of vulnerable groups and increase their

capacity to contribute to development. Where relevant, this can include indigenous groups.

11. New Zealand stated that annual technical meetings on the Decade should not be considered necessary as a matter of course. All available resources should be used in primary issues of importance to indigenous people. The Government noted that the Decade would be part of the agenda of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations. The Government expressed its support for the coordinating work on the Decade being carried out by the Centre for Human Rights and considered it helpful if the final programme of activities could clarify the activities for which the Centre would be responsible. New Zealand attaches particular value to appropriate publicity for the Decade. The final programme of activities should encourage national governments to involve indigenous people in Decade planning, activities and national policies affecting them. Governments can be encouraged to make progress generally on the implementation of human rights and ratification of relevant human rights instruments, with particular focus on areas where indigenous people are most affected. Finally, New Zealand noted that the suggested annual themes included a focus on "self-government and self-determination" and hoped that the programme of action would not pre-empt the outcome of intergovernmental consideration of the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples.

ANNEX I

Draft programme of activities for the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, as adopted by the Technical Meeting on the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People, Geneva, 20-22 July 1995

A. Objectives

1. Taking into account General Assembly resolution 48/163 of 21 December 1993, the main objective of the Decade is the strengthening of international cooperation for the solution of problems faced by indigenous people in such areas as human rights, the environment, development, health, culture and education.

2. The specialized agencies of the United Nations system and other international and national agencies, as well as communities and private enterprises, should devote special attention to development activities of benefit to indigenous communities.

3. A major objective of the Decade is education of indigenous and non-indigenous societies concerning the situation, cultures, languages, rights and aspirations of indigenous people. In particular, efforts should be made to cooperate with the United Nations Decade for Human Rights Education.

4. An objective of the Decade is the promotion and protection of the rights of indigenous people, and their empowerment to make choices that enable them to retain their cultural identity while participating in national, economic and social life, with full respect for their cultural values, languages, traditions and forms of social organization.

5. An objective of the Decade is to further the implementation of the recommendations pertaining to indigenous people of all high-level international conferences, including the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development, the World Conference on Human Rights, in particular its recommendation that consideration be given to the establishment of a permanent forum for indigenous people in the United Nations system, the United Nations Conference on Population and Development and the World Summit for Social Development as well as all future high-level meetings.

6. An objective of the Decade is the adoption of the draft United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples and the further development of international standards as well as national legislation for the protection and promotion of the human rights of indigenous people, including effective means of monitoring and guaranteeing those rights.

7. The objectives of the Decade should be assessed by quantifiable outcomes that will improve the lives of indigenous people and that can be evaluated halfway through the Decade and at its end.

B. Activities of the major actors

1. United Nations observances

8. A formal observance each year on the International Day of the World's Indigenous People, in New York, Geneva and other offices of the United Nations.

9. Official observance of the Decade as part of the Fourth World Conference on Women, the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II) and other international conferences related to the aims and themes of the Decade.

10. Issuance of a special series of stamps by the United Nations Postal Administration highlighting the goals and themes of the Decade.

2. Activities of the Coordinator and the Centre for Human Rights

11. Establish, as a matter of urgency, an adequately staffed and resourced indigenous people's unit.

12. Request Governments to second qualified indigenous people, in consultation with interested national indigenous organizations, to assist in the administration of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People.

13. Create a fellowship programme, in collaboration with the Advisory Services of the Centre for Human Rights and Governments, to assist indigenous people wishing to gain experience in the different branches of the Centre for Human Rights, and in other parts of the United Nations system. Such fellowships might be available for indigenous research and other similar activities.

14. Open a roster of indigenous experts in various fields who might be available to assist United Nations agencies, in collaboration with Governments as appropriate, as partners or consultants.

15. Create an advisory group of persons with relevant knowledge of indigenous issues, acting in their personal capacity, to advise the Coordinator for the Decade and United Nations organizations, at their request. The members of this advisory group could include eminent indigenous persons, governmental representatives, independent experts and officials of the specialized agencies.

16. Consider the need to hold coordination meetings of Governments, organizations of the United Nations system and indigenous and non-governmental organizations, as necessary, to consider, examine and evaluate Decade activities and develop an integrated, action-oriented strategy to advance the interests of indigenous people. The Economic and Social Council should hold mid-term and end-term reviews of the Decade in accordance with its resolution 1988/63 of 27 July 1988. The Working Group on Indigenous Populations should review international activities undertaken during the Decade and receive information from Governments on the implementation of the goals of the Decade in their respective countries.

17. Compile, on the basis of communications of the focal points in the United Nations system, a regular news-sheet containing information about meetings of interest, major or innovatory projects, new sources of funding, policy developments and other news to be widely distributed.

18. Encourage the development of partnership projects in association with Governments to address specific regional or thematic issues bringing together Governments, indigenous people and appropriate United Nations agencies.

19. Establish an information programme linking the Coordinator to focal points of the United Nations system, national committees for the Decade and, through appropriate channels, indigenous networks; also develop a database of indigenous organizations and other relevant information, in cooperation with indigenous people, Governments, academic institutions and other relevant bodies.

20. Organize meetings on relevant themes of concern to indigenous people with indigenous participation.

21. Launch a series of publications on indigenous issues to inform policy makers, opinion-formers, students and other interested people.

22. Develop, in collaboration with Governments, training programmes on human rights for indigenous people, including the preparation of relevant training materials, when possible in indigenous languages.

23. Establish a board of trustees or advisory group, including indigenous people, to assist the Coordinator of the Voluntary Fund for the International Decade.

24. Encourage the development of projects and programmes, in collaboration with Governments, indigenous people and the appropriate United Nations agencies, for support by the Voluntary Fund for the Decade.

25. Ensure, in coordination with Governments and indigenous organizations, the necessary measures to guarantee financing of the objectives of the Decade.

3. United Nations public information activities

26. Produce and disseminate a series of posters on the Decade using designs by indigenous artists.

27. Organize a lecture series at United Nations information centres and campuses linked to the United Nations University, using indigenous speakers.

28. Publish in indigenous languages the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, international human rights conventions and, upon its adoption, the United Nations declaration on the rights of indigenous peoples. Consider the use of audiovisual material for this purpose. Consider also the involvement of indigenous experts and their own information networks to disseminate information about the Decade.

29. Prepare, in collaboration with the Centre for Human Rights, information about indigenous people for distribution to the general public.

4. Operational activities of the United Nations system

30. Establish focal points for indigenous issues in all appropriate organizations of the United Nations system.

31. Adopt programmes of action for the Decade in the governing bodies of specialized agencies of the United Nations system in their own fields of competence, in close cooperation with indigenous people.

32. Urge Governments to ensure that the programmes and budgets of relevant intergovernmental organizations give priority and devote sufficient resources for furthering the aims of the Decade, and request that regular reports on the action taken be submitted to the governing body or executive council of each organization.

33. Prepare, publish and disseminate a manual containing practical information for indigenous people on the operations and procedures of United Nations agencies.

34. Develop research on the socio-economic conditions of indigenous people, in collaboration with indigenous organizations and other appropriate partners, with a view to publishing regular reports in order to contribute to the solution of problems faced by indigenous people, taking into account paragraph 6.26 of the Programme of Action of the United Nations Conference on Population and Development. a/

35. Encourage Governments to establish appropriate mechanisms and practices to ensure the participation of indigenous people in the design and implementation of national and regional programmes of concern to them.

36. Hold regular inter-agency consultations with indigenous people, in collaboration with Governments, to exchange views and develop strategies on the programme of action for the Decade.

37. Hold consultations with Governments to examine, with national committees and development agencies, possibilities of cooperation in the activities of the Decade.

38. Develop training materials for indigenous people on human rights, including the translation of the main international instruments into different indigenous languages, and give them wide distribution. Consider the possibility of using radio programmes in order to gain access to indigenous communities not having written languages.

39. Prepare a database on national legislation on matters of particular relevance to indigenous people.

40. Hold consultations of all interested parties on the themes of human rights, development, the environment, health and education, and culture, with a view to elaborating programmes in these areas.

5. Activities of regional organizations

41. Implement existing and develop new regional programmes of action to promote and support the objectives of the Decade.

42. Hold regional meetings on indigenous issues with existing regional organizations with a view to strengthening coordination, taking advantage of the machinery of the United Nations system and promoting the direct and active participation of indigenous people of the different regions in collaboration with Governments. The Working Group on Indigenous Populations could consider the possibility of holding its sessions in conjunction with these meetings.

43. Develop training courses and technical assistance programmes for indigenous people in areas such as project design and management, environment, health and education. Promote the exchange of skills and experiences of indigenous people from different regions.

44. Make funds available at the regional level to activities benefiting indigenous people.

45. Encourage regional organizations to draw up regional instruments for the promotion and protection of indigenous people in the framework of their own structures, and promote existing regional instruments.

6. Activities of Member States

46. Establish national committees for the Decade or similar mechanisms, to include indigenous people, all relevant departments and other interested parties duly convened by Governments, to mobilize public support for the various activities connected with the Decade.

47. Intensify coordination and communication at the national level between relevant ministries, agencies and regional and local authorities by establishing focal points or other mechanisms for coordination and dissemination of information.

48. Use part of the resources of existing programmes and of international assistance for activities of direct benefit to indigenous people and, where possible, provide additional funds for specific activities.

49. Develop, in collaboration with indigenous communities, national plans for the Decade, including main objectives and targets, fixing quantitative outcomes and taking into account the need for resources and possible sources of financing.

50. Provide adequate resources for indigenous institutions, organizations and communities to develop their own plans and actions according to their own priorities.

51. Adopt measures, in cooperation with indigenous people, to increase knowledge among the non-indigenous population, starting at the elementary-school level, concerning the history, traditions, culture and rights of indigenous people, with special emphasis on the education of teachers at all levels, and adopt measures to restore indigenous place names.

52. Consider ratification and implementation of ILO Convention 169 and other international and regional instruments in close consultation with the indigenous organizations of each country.

53. Legally recognize the existence, identity and rights of indigenous people through constitutional reforms and the adoption of new laws to improve their legal status and guarantee their territorial, economic, social, cultural, political and civil rights.

54. Implement chapter 26 of Agenda 21 of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the relevant provisions of the Convention on Biological Diversity, the Vienna Declaration and Programme of Action, the Programme of Action of the United Nations Conference on Population and Development, the Programme of Action of the World Summit for Social Development as well as the relevant provisions of future high-level conferences.

7. Activities of indigenous organizations

55. Establish an information network which can be linked to the Coordinator and facilitate communications between the United Nations system, relevant governmental departments and indigenous communities.

56. Indigenous organizations and international indigenous networks should develop information for local communities concerning the goals of the Decade and the activities of the United Nations.

57. Establish and support indigenous schools and university-level institutions and collaborate with the relevant United Nations agencies; participate in the revision of school texts and the contents of programmes of study in order to eliminate discriminatory content and promote the development of indigenous cultures and, where appropriate, in indigenous languages and scripts; develop indigenous curricula for schools and research institutions.

58. Create documentation centres, archives and *in situ* museums concerning indigenous people, their cultures, laws, beliefs and values, with material that could be used to inform and educate non-indigenous people on these matters. Indigenous people should participate on a preferential basis in the administration of these centres.

59. Establish and promote networks of indigenous journalists and launch indigenous periodicals at the regional and international levels.

60. Indigenous people may transmit to Governments, the United Nations and its specialized agencies and regional organizations the programmes concerning their priority rights.

8. Activities of non-governmental organizations and other interested parties, including education establishments, the media and business

61. Cooperate with indigenous organizations, communities and people in the planning of activities for the Decade.

62. Non-governmental organizations working with indigenous people should involve indigenous people in their activities.

63. Create radio and television centres in indigenous regions to provide information on the problems and proposals of indigenous people and to improve communications between indigenous communities.

64. Promote indigenous cultures through the publication of books, the production of compact discs, and the organization of various artistic and cultural events which enhance knowledge of and serve to develop indigenous cultures and establish indigenous cultural and documentation centres.

65. Involve different social and cultural groups in the activities planned for the Decade.

Notes

a/ Report of the International Conference on Population and Development, Cairo, 5-13 September 1994, chap. I, resolution 1, annex, chap. VI.D.

ANNEX II

Recommendations regarding the programme of activities of the Decade of the Working Group on Indigenous Populations at its thirteenth session

171. The Working Group decided to endorse the programme of activities elaborated by the Technical Meeting. It further recommended the inclusion in the final programme of activities of the Decade of the holding of a world conference on indigenous peoples and an expert meeting on problems arising from nuclear testing and dumping on indigenous lands, within the framework of the Decade.

172. The Working Group decided to recommend that the members of the Board of Trustees of the Voluntary Fund for the Decade be appointed as soon as possible to consider projects submitted by indigenous and other organizations during the International Decade.

ANNEX III

Proposed calendar of activities to be undertaken by the Coordinator and the Centre for Human Rights for 1996 to 1999

1996

1. Regional workshops on health and indigenous people.

2. Expert meeting on health and indigenous people.

3. Publication of manual on the United Nations system and indigenous people.

4. Preliminary report on socio-economic data on indigenous people compiled by the United Nations system.

1997

1. Regional workshops on education and indigenous people.

2. Expert meeting on education and indigenous people.

3. Publication of book on environment and sustainable development: an indigenous perspective.

4. Preparation of training materials on human rights for indigenous people.

1998

1. Regional workshops on indigenous economic self-development.

2. Expert meeting on economic development and indigenous people.

3. Final report of socio-economic data compiled by the United Nations system.

4. Publication of training handbook for indigenous people on project design, management and evaluation.

1999

1. Regional training workshops on human rights and indigenous people.

2. Expert meeting on human rights and indigenous people.

3. Publication on indigenous health: concerns, approaches and perspectives.

4. Mid-term review of programme of activities of the Decade.